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INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1370
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 3963
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3203
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1744
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5573
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2203
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9166
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3026
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP, AC, PM

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REPORT - INDIAN MUSLIMS CONDEMN
MUMBAI TERROR ATTACKS

1. SUMMARY: Prior to the Eid-ul-Zuha holiday (December 9), Muslims across the country demonstrated or spoke out in condemnation of terrorism, asserting that it has no place in Islam. Thousands demonstrated in the streets of Mumbai. Celebrities joined other Muslim community members in denouncing terror on TV and in the press. In another significant gesture, a section of Muslims toned down the annual December 6 commemoration of a 1992 Ayodhya communal riots in which Hindus destroyed the Babri mosque. Above all, the Muslim clergy has announced a "Black Eid" on December 9, signaling the community's sorrow and solidarity with all the Mumbai terror victims. Media reports suggest that Muslims in this country have disowned the terrorists' misplaced jihad, and forcefully staked their claim to being as Indian as anybody else in the country. END SUMMARY.

-- BOLLYWOOD SUPERSTAR SAYS MUMBAI ATTACKERS UN-ISLAMIC

2. Shah Rukh Khan, one of India's top film stars, said the extremists who attacked Mumbai were un-Islamic. "There's nothing Islamic about terrorism. I am a Muslim, I read the Koran, but nowhere in the holy text does it say you can get jannat [paradise] from jihad," he was quoted as saying by THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA.

3. Khan, 43, is one of a number of Muslim actors who dominate Bollywood. The actor, whose wife is Hindu, is currently working on a new film "My Name is Khan," exploring Islam in the post-9/11 world and the misconception that all Muslims are extremists. Khan told

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in an interview that Pakistan was "living in denial... let us accept the truth that these guys [extremists] are being trained there." He also appeared on the evening NDTV News program.

-- BLACK ARM BANDS, NOT BIRYANI!

¶4. Bollywood's other Muslims too are in mourning and will reportedly not celebrate Eid Tuesday. "How can they sit down to a biryani [a rice and mutton delicacy] when their mouths are dry, their eyes are moist and their hearts are heavy with the images of 26/11?" They will wear a black arm-band instead, THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA reported.

¶5. "The question of celebration doesn't arise," Bollywood diva Katrina Kaif told the paper. Mumbai's Muslim minority, fearing reprisals, have said they will conduct only low-key celebrations for the upcoming Eid-al-Adha festival, which marks the prophet Ibrahim's obedience to God with the ritual slaughter of animals.

-- MUSLIM ORGANIZATIONS HOLD PEACE MARCH, DEPLORE ATTACKS

¶6. Reports said on Sunday, Muslims across Mumbai held a peace march between two sites that were attacked - from the Mumbai train station to the Trident-Oberoi hotel. More than 5,000 people rallied near Trident Hotel to expressed regret that the patriotism of Indian Muslims was being questioned because Islam is being wrongly interpreted by some Muslims.

NEW DELHI 00003088 002 OF 003

¶7. The NDTV news channel reported that there was a conscious display of patriotism at the gathering, which included film personalities, businessmen, students, women and children. "Some people think that they are the saviors of Islam and they speak for all Muslims. We want to tell them no. We don't want you. You are terrorists," said India's most famous lyricist Javed Akhtar. Noted actor Javed Jaffery said, "Islam is being misunderstood. In the name of Jihad, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are destroying property and killing people. The actual meaning of Jihad is defense."

¶8. "We do not know whether this was done by people from Pakistan or India, but whatever has happened is wrong and beastly," Maulana Agha Nasiri, a cleric from Shia Alim said at the rally. "Killing innocents is not jihad. This is animal behavior," said Maulana Nasri, a senior cleric.

-- MUSLIMS GO EASY ON OBSERVING ANNUAL BABRI PROTESTS

¶9. Reports said a section of India's Muslims also toned down their annual observance of the 16th anniversary of the razing of the Babri mosque, as a mark of mourning. Subdued protests were staged in the holy city of Ayodhya, the scene of the demolition of the ancient mosque, and other states as a somber mood prevailed in the country.

-- MUSLIMS FEEL HEAT OF 26/11

¶10. In the wake of the Mumbai attack, the media have been considering on the state of India's Muslim large minority and how the country treats its minorities generally. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES reported that even as Muslims were mourning with the rest of the nation, the Mumbai attacks appear to have created a fresh, vocal backlash against Muslims in India, with reports of jibes, anger and open prejudice in urban areas.

¶11. While the Indian Muslim grieves "along with rest of the country, there is a sense of bewildered confusion because somewhere he feels that rest of the country looks upon him with suspicion and blame," an appeal in the newspaper by some prominent Muslims said.

-- "NEW AGENDA FOR INDIAN MUSLIMS"

¶12. The DAILY NEWS & ANALYSIS English daily said, "To equate Indian Muslims with Pakistanis (or any other country) is puerile in its stereotyping, preposterous in its ambit of argument, and insensitive in the extreme." Lauding the stand taken by the Muslim clergy in Mumbai to refuse burial to terrorists, editor Ayaz Memon said this suggests Indian Muslims are now willing to help themselves and find a new voice.

¶13. Memon set a five-point agenda for the community - "Demythify jihad and denounce terrorism; emphasize education; combine prudence with charity; shed insularity; and realize our problems are our own."

NEW DELHI 00003088 003 OF 003

¶14. COMMENT: With India blaming Islamic terrorists from Pakistan for the Mumbai incident, it was feared that the Muslim community, particularly in Mumbai, could be targeted for retribution or hostility. People in some Muslim neighborhoods were dreading a sectarian assault by Hindu right-wingers and anti-terrorism agencies. More than a week after the incident those fears have subsided. From elite public statements to community peace marches to calls for toned-down Eid celebrations, India's Muslims have made their sentiments very clear about the Mumbai terror attacks. One commentator noted hopefully that the recent terror attacks might serve as a "catharsis for Indian Muslims to rouse themselves from helplessness into self-help with intelligence, energy and commitment."

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